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EASTERN EUROPE: Grain Harvest Prospects

Grain production in Eastern Europe in 1982 probably will total about 94 million tons, slightly above the harvest last year of 92 million tons and near the 93.7-million-ton average of the past five years.

Comment: Good crop prospects in Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia will largely be offset by problems in Romania and Czechoslovakia. Crop conditions in East Germany and Bulgaria point toward an average grain harvest.

The production of small grains--rye, barley, and oats--is likely to be above average. On the other hand, the condition of the corn crop--about one-third of total East European grain production--suggests only an average harvest. Weather during the next several weeks will still play a role in determining production, because the harvest does not begin until late September.

A near-average grain harvest will only marginally improve food supplies in Eastern Europe. Most regimes, faced with hard currency constraints, have already planned cutbacks in grain imports this year. Grain imports in the marketing year ending 30 June 1983 will decline moderately from the 13.4 million tons imported in marketing year 1982--which itself was below the 16-million-ton average of the previous three years.

The grain shortages will lead to further declines in livestock herds. The resulting reductions in meat supplies, especially in Poland, Romania, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia, will increase public dissatisfaction.

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